



Agape'Care Cradle, Inc.  
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PO Box 704  
Wichita KS 67201-0704

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**OUR MISSION**

AgapéCare Cradle- A specialized mortuary reflects Christ's unconditional love by meeting funeral needs, and providing bereavement support to parent families who suffer the loss of a baby.

**OUR VISION**

Every parent who suffers the loss of a baby will be treated with highest dignity and care regardless of their ability to pay for funeral services and supplies.

AgapéCare Cradle will show the love of Christ by honoring the "least of these" (Matt. 25:40) to demonstrate the absolute intrinsic value of all made in His image, even the smallest and most frail.



Agape'Care Cradle  
*Bringing hope to the broken hearted*

Photography by Kelly Lindsay



**Agape'Care Cradle, Inc.**  
*Bringing Hope to the Brokenhearted*

**COMING HOME...**

*Elliot's Journey*



When Josh and Angie Hughes found out they were expecting, they were flooded with emotions: excitement at the thought of holding their baby for the very first time, and even fear considering the responsibility of raising a child. Would their tiny apartment be adequate? How many diapers would he need? They fretted that the nursery might not be quite complete before he arrived.

All this came to a crushing halt on the evening Elliot was born. Josh and Angie learned shortly after Elliot's birth, that he had serious internal problems. Elliot's esophagus was not connected to his stomach, so he was rushed to Children's Hospital in Birmingham, Alabama for surgery. Little did his parents realize then, that the next three months would represent the hardest road they had ever traveled. Although Elliot looked perfectly normal on the outside, his condition would require him to undergo operation after operation to repair the abnormalities. Each surgery ended with, "He did well, but we weren't able to connect the ends of his esophagus together." Finally his doctors decided to try gradually

stretching his esophagus, a technique that involved pulling on both ends to hasten growth. This seemed to be working well, until one of the knots came loose. Elliot's doctor was optimistic, because the ends were almost close enough together to be connected.

Surgery was scheduled to fix the loose knot, and expected to only take about 15 minutes. The operation was considered minor compared to the many complex surgeries Elliot had already been through. During surgery, some scar tissue was found that had formed a scab-like area on a major artery. While the scar tissue was being removed, Elliot started bleeding badly and the bleeding could not be stopped. Sweet baby Elliot, just three months old, passed away during surgery on that Monday afternoon, January 21, 2008.

Instead of bringing Elliot home a healthy baby to the nursery they had tenderly prepared for him, Josh and Angie, only twenty-six years old themselves, were suddenly thrown into a whirlwind of decisions they had to make quickly. Shocked and devastated, Angie spent the entire day following Elliot's death, on the phone calling to find out what funeral arrangements would cost, and worrying if they would be able to afford his funeral and burial. Embalming, transportation, a casket...details that are part and parcel in the business of death, seemed overwhelming while mourning the sudden unexpected loss of their son.

When Angie called AgapéCare Cradle in Wichita, her anxiety, frustration and fear began to diminish. Someone was LISTENING intently to her deep grief and urgent need. Her questions were being answered with kind, factual explanations of what would take place over the next several days. Together with AgapéCare Cradle alongside them, Josh and Angie made a plan to have Elliot's funeral at Northside Bible Chapel in Kechi, near where Angie's family lived. After the funeral, Elliot was laid to rest in Kechi cemetery, next to his great-grandmother's grave.

**(Cont on page 2)**



Photography by Kelly Lindsay



## How You Can Help Us

Pray regularly for the families we serve.

Conduct a Labor of Love  
(see "Volunteering a Labor of Love" enclosed)

Designate a memorial to AgapéCare Cradle.

Donate or purchase an item or service listed below for AgapéCare Cradle.

Mini-Van - new or new condition

Exterior business sign with lighting & installation

Stackable Washer & Dryer  
(PURCHASED - THANK YOU Faith Bible Baptist

Ladies Ministry)

Couch & Loveseats – matching new or new condition neutral color / pattern

Vacuum – new or new condition

Hand Truck/Dolly

Heavy duty paper trimmer with sliding blade

Exhaust fan interior to exterior & installation

Wash windows 2 x monthly  
Heavy duty 3 hole punch  
(20+sheet capability)

Brochure folding machine  
(capable of half and tri-fold)

Brother P-Touch Labeling machine

CD Storage Rack

8-10 ft Aluminum ladder

## Stepping Up a Miracle

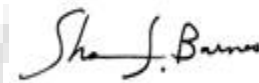
*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1*

When I founded AgapéCare Cradle as an idea ten years ago, with no money or people alongside, I did not know where to begin, so I did what I could do and started telling everybody I knew, one by one, about AgapéCare Cradle. Little did I realize then, what incredible commitment and stamina would be required to nurture a little baby organization into a credible service provider delivering actual and tangible services in the community. YES we are meeting people at a point of desperate need . . . through a community of caring people like you!

In 2007 AgapéCare Cradle was able to receive one out of every four families who called. Every family received into AgapéCare's specialized funeral program will testify to it's impact, and to the validation, love and professional

assistance they experience during their time with us. We receive families based on availability of volunteers and special funeral supplies unique to our program, without regard to income or other qualifiers.

AgapéCare Cradle's challenge now is to achieve sustainable funding through regular commitments, so this very special program can be available to EVERY brokenhearted family suffering through the loss of a baby family member. AgapéCare Cradle needs about \$20,000 each month in sustainable income to provide comprehensive professional services to every family who suffers a stillborn loss or infant death in Sedgwick County each year. Step by step, together we are stepping up this miracle now evidenced by compassionate care and tangible service that was simply belief and faith just a few years ago.



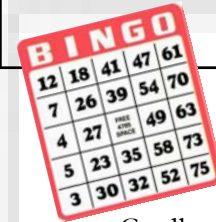
**Shannon S. Barnes**  
Executive Director

## Elliot's Journey (cont. from pg 1)

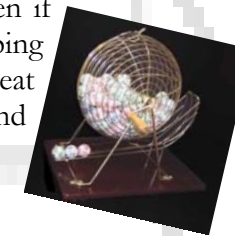
Josh and Angie recently moved back to the Wichita area to be nearer to Angie's family. They accept they may never understand "why?" Even four months later, tears sometimes fall as if they will never stop. They are beginning to focus more now on "how?"... how to live the life that lies ahead – to LIVE! They hope those who read about their experience of losing their precious baby son Elliot, will understand...

*"It is written solely as a window to our mortal hearts...the view there is human. We write now to let others know we are able to move forward through our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Although there were times we cursed Him for allowing us to go through such a terrible loss, we have always found Him to be faithful, even when we are not. No one can understand this pain, except that walking through it together on this path now, we trust God who gives us hope. Someday we will see our boy and be reunited once again".*

## BINGO!



Helping Agape'Care Cradle can be as easy as spending one evening each month playing BINGO! Agape'Care Cradle volunteers host Bingo on the 4th Saturday of every month at a local Bingo hall - Bingo Casino. Proceeds benefit the organization. The Bingo hall is located at 1215 S. Parklane just south of Parklane Shopping Center. Early Bird cards are played at 6:30 p.m. Regular Bingo session starts at 7:30 p.m. Each session has a final game that pays out \$500.00. There are two progressive games now paying over \$800.00 if a Bingo win occurs within so many numbers. These progressive games will go up to \$1000.00 each this summer if there is not a winner. Come and join us! You might be that winner and even if not, you will have great fun helping Agape'Care Cradle. We have a great group of volunteers helping and everyone has a good time.



## Welcome Staff

When Germaine Hall, a WSU Social Work student, read an article about AgapéCare Cradle last year, she immediately knew where she would love to put her skills to work for a great cause. Germaine began volunteering in March, 2007, becoming our first regular part time staff member last January.



Judith Lembke toured Agape'Care's facility at 126 N. Emporia street with a group of women last fall. Judith, who suffered the loss of a baby son many years ago, felt God was leading her to volunteer. She soon began volunteering in the office three mornings each week, and joined the organization as a part time staff member in March.

## First United Methodist Church BUNCO Tournament

Sisters In Christ from the Valley Center First United Methodist Church were inspired by an article in the Wichita Eagle February 18, 2007 that featured Agape'Care Cradle. They were so inspired in fact, that they voted to have an Agape'Care volunteer come and talk about the organization at their next meeting. Amazed with what Agape'Care Cradle provides for grieving families, and moved by how needed this service is in the community they decided to help through charitable giving. They formed a committee to plan a Bunco tournament to help raise funds for Agape'Care Cradle.

Sisters in Christ members Julie Schaar, Susan Wolfe, Alisa Kirk, Cricket House, and Stephanie Gillig formed a committee to plan a Bunco tournament to help raise funds for Agape'Care Cradle. Committee leaders each took charge of organizing, advertising, obtaining Bunco supplies, lining up volunteers, food, registration, location, reservations, raffle prizes and fees. Each person helping with the tournament kept in close contact with their committee leader to ensure that each task was completed.

After five weeks of planning, the Bunco tournament was a wonderful success raising \$1,050.00 in donations to help Agape'Care Cradle help families. Everyone involved enjoyed participating in this labor of love activity that so positively helps parents through such a devastating time. The tournament was great fun and they have plans to make it an annual event. THANK YOU Sisters in Christ!





# AgapéCare Cradle, Inc.

*Bringing Hope to the Brokenhearted*

## IRS Grants AgapéCare Cradle Permanent 501(c) 3 Status

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### *Board of Directors*

**Bonnie Stephenson, MBA**  
*President*

**Joy Dutton**  
*Secretary*

**Susan Wetta, CPA**  
*Treasurer*

**Amanda Bowers**  
**Rev. Mike Gray**  
**Becky Hesse, Attorney**  
**Sue Laudert, MD**

*Executive Director:*  
**Shannon Barnes, RN, FD**

**Additional members are desired  
with proven leadership ability,  
experience and expertise in the  
following key areas of  
organization need.**

**Call 316-518-1572  
or 316-263-4673**

**for more information about  
receiving a detailed  
board prospectus.**

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**Fund Development**  
**Community Relations**  
**Human Resources**  
**Experienced Nonprofit**

**Directors** (*Prior Nonprofit  
Board Member experience with start-  
up nonprofit organizations*)

**Professionals - Groups**

**Impacted** (*Government, EMS,  
Medicine, Law, Hospice, etc.*)

On April 4, 2004, the IRS granted AgapéCare Cradle, Inc. provisional status as a 501(c) 3 nonprofit charitable organization. The IRS requires a four year period, called an 'Advance Ruling Period' before it grants permanent status. This provisional period tells the IRS whether or not newly formed organizations like AgapéCare Cradle are truly supported by the public.

AgapéCare Cradle received notice from the IRS in April granting permanent 501(c) 3 nonprofit status. In Sedgwick County, there are about 100 families each year who suffer the loss of a baby due to natural causes 20 weeks to one year old. AgapéCare's cost to provide professional mortuary services and special supplies assuming paid staff is about \$2,200 per family. We do not require families to pay for funeral supplies or services provided to them by AgapéCare Cradle. We do ask them to pay something to help us with costs, if they are able to do that.

Most families choose to designate AgapéCare Cradle as a memorial in memory of their baby. This way, others may donate in memory of the child. Memorial donations help us to serve more families. Anyone can designate a memorial to AgapéCare Cradle in memory of a loved one. Memorials made to AgapéCare Cradle in memory of mothers, fathers, grandmothers, pediatric health professionals and others served by standard funeral homes, are a lasting tribute to honor the memory of a loved one, while helping support families suffering through the loss of a baby. Thank you for your support.

## Then and Now

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*Lisa Grabam, joined AgapéCare Cradle as a founding board member in 2003. Lisa sent the following message after returning in April as a volunteer to help paint a newly opened workroom in the facility:*

"I am praying you remain strong. What has happened with AgapéCare is a miracle. I felt blessed as I saw all the memorabilia and special baby clothes laying around, the ladies working in the office, and all the other given items that make the facility so warm. Real families have been touched by this service. A lot has happened since I left and it's always good to see how God is so faithful!"



## AgapéCare Cradle, Inc.

*Bringing Hope to the Brokenhearted*

### Who We Serve

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AgapéCare Cradle recognizes each baby as a valuable and worthy person, precious and uniquely irreplaceable. We believe each baby who dies deserves to be dignified in his or her death through a respectful funeral or memorial service. We embrace brokenhearted mothers and fathers at a time of desperate need to help them to comfortably and confidently tell others the story of their precious baby's life.

AgapéCare Cradle provided comprehensive services to one family in 2006; nine families in 2007, and to six families thus far in 2008, honoring the lives of their babies 14 weeks gestation to 13 months old. Attendance at the babies' visitation, funeral, graveside & memorial services ranged from 15 – 250 people.

AgapéCare Cradle continued regular supportive contact with each family for one year following their loss. We held our first annual "Recognition & Remembrance Service at Wichita First Church of the Nazarene, on November 30, 2007. Approximately 140 people attended this special event remembering the babies of nine families served in 2007, and recognizing volunteers who helped make it possible. All nine families represented themselves at our first annual Remembrance service.

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### How far we've come

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AgapéCare Cradle became licensed as a Kansas Funeral Establishment on June 6, 2006, receiving 39 requests for services from this point through December 31, 2007, and served ten families. We received families into our program without regard to income or other qualifiers, based only on availability of volunteer staff and special funeral supplies unique to our program. We provided services and ongoing supportive contact to each family, utilizing an all volunteer staff. Jan.-Apr., 2008, AgapéCare Cradle has received 8 requests and provided comprehensive services to six families so far in 2008. We thank our donors, advocates and volunteers for championing our cause and giving generously to the work of AgapéCare Cradle.

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